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HAPLR Scores Rank Input, Output

Thomas J. Hennen Jr.

The 2010 version of Hennen's American Public Library Ratings, using the latest federal data reported by 7,930 public libraries in the United States, was released April 15. Published since 1999, the HAPLR Index identifies the public libraries in America with the highest input and output measures. As index author, I add the scores for each library within nine population categories to develop a weighted score. A list of the top 10 libraries in each population category is also available.

The HAPLR Index enters its second decade with some changes, but not every change that observers have urged. This edition of HAPLR ratings is based on data published by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in 2009. The data covers reports from libraries that were filed in 2008, primarily about 2007 activities.

There has been a change in the IMLS reporting cycle, speeding up when the data is published. HAPLR will probably issue a "Round Two" late in 2010 when the data filed in 2009 is available.

In evaluating HAPLR after 10 years, I considered modifying the measures extensively. However, for this edition, I have retained "classic" HAPLR elements but for the next edition will modify the factors considerably. It will be time to do so.

In preparing the 10th edition of the HAPLR Index, I found that 10 public libraries have made it into the top 10 list for their population group in every single edition (see sidebar).

Not just scores

The HAPLR system does not simply develop scores for libraries, but also offers a variety of reports to libraries that compare their performance to comparably sized libraries in their state and in the nation. Over the years, thousands of libraries have used standard or specialized reports to evaluate current operations and chart future courses of action.

Altogether, 312 libraries have made it at least once into the Top Ten listing for their population category in the past decade. This year, 14 libraries entered the Top Ten for their population category for the first time (see sidebar).

In this edition, I have stopped using imputed data. What is imputed data and why does not using it matter? When individual libraries themselves fail to report data elements, IMLS imputes data for them. The agency does the imputation based on, among other things, past reports of an individual library or average for libraries within a population category. Eliminating libraries that have imputed data for any measure in the HAPLR rating system means eliminating 1,284 libraries in the IMLS dataset.

HENNEN'S TOP SCORERS

IN TOP 10 FOR 10 YEARS

- Bridgeport (W. Va.) Public Library
- Carmel (Ind.) Clay Public Library
- Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library
- Denver Public Library
- Hennepin County (Minn.) Library
- Naperville (Ill.) Public Library
- Saint Charles City-County (Mo.) Library District
- Santa Clara County (Calif.) Library
- Twinsburg (Ohio) Public Library
- Washington-Centerville (Ohio) Public Library

FIRST TIME IN TOP 10

- Algonquin Area (Ill.) Public Library District
- Beresford (S.D.) Public Library
- Burton (Ohio) Public Library
- Canal (Ohio) Public Library
- Champaign (Ill.) Public Library
- Eagle (Alaska) Public Library
- Elk Village (Ill.) Public Library
- Evansville-Vanderburgh (Ind.) Public Library
- Grand Marais (Minn.) Public Library
- John A. Stahl Library, Nebr.
- Orange Beach (Ala.) Public Library
- Rock Creek (Ohio) Public Library
- Wayne County (Ohio) Public Library
- Westerville (Ohio) Public Library

For more information visit <http://www.haplr-index.com/>

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